Anarchism/Anarchist Geography

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Glossary

Decentralism The revolutionary social anarchist philosophy and organization of space necessary to support new cooperative modes of living and working.
Federation A union comprised of a number of self-governing territories or organizations who freely constitute themselves to cooperate for a number of varied purposes (economic, social, cultural, etc.).
Psychogeography The study of the effects of the environment on the behavior and emotions of people in order to better understand and subvert the forces that control the circumstances of everyday life.
Social Ecology Recognition of the social basis for environmental problems: a philosophy and activist practice that attributes imbalances in human/environment relations to hierarchies and forms of domination in social relationships (and vice versa).

What Is Anarchism?

Anarchism is a philosophy that argues against statism and a political order based on authority or hierarchy. It opposes the use of power to secure the privileges of a few, restrict individual freedom and deny the rich diversity of social life. While anarchism shares with socialism a critique of capitalism and the desire to replace repressive economic structures with common ownership of the means of production and distribution according to need, it stresses the importance of eliminating authoritarian relationships wherever they arise. It also promotes the need for parity of means and ends in the social change process. This includes direct action and efforts to bring into being, in the present, environments that experiment with new communal forms and promote greater popular participation, equality of condition, freedom, and social justice.

Anarchists maintain a belief in the capacity of people to base their economic, social, and political lives upon cooperation and federation, and to function without the imposition of structures of domination. While individualist anarchists stress the overarching importance of personal autonomy, social anarchists seek to demonstrate the importance of basing personal freedom and creative development on social responsibility, a strong collective foundation, and supportive social environments.

The roots of these ideas trace back to several nineteenth-century activists and theorists, including some prominent geographers. Many of their ideas were revived within the pages of *Antipode: A Radical Journal of Geography* in the 1970s, a time when a growing number of geographers demanded greater relevance and attention to social inequality from their discipline. The actual term 'anarchist geography' likely emerged during this time.

The Historical Relationship of Anarchism and Geography

The confluence of anarchism as a political philosophy and geography as an emerging discipline occurred in the latter half of the nineteenth century largely in response to European nation-building and growing social inequities. As taught in the halls of European military colleges, geography was often complicit in promoting imperial conquest by mapping resources to benefit European nations. Two prominent dissidents within the field, Elisée Reclus (1830–1905) and Peter Kropotkin (1842–1921), employed their geographic knowledge to counter these tendencies. Their efforts contributed not only to the progressive development of the discipline, but to revolutionary movements for social justice and the foundation of social anarchism as a philosophy and practice. In the effort to pursue their profession as geographers, Kropotkin and Reclus uncovered principles of social and physical life that underscored the need for revolutionary change in their society. They also believed that a revolution in social and economic relationships would necessitate the creation of totally new or renovated land-use patterns and built environments. Spatial concepts are thus key to social anarchist philosophy and strategies to promote radical social change.

The Social Geography of Elisée Reclus and Peter Kropotkin

One can best understand the evolving relationship between anarchism and geography, its theories and practical applications, in the lives and body of writing generated by two prominent geographers, Elisée Reclus and Peter Alexeyevich Kropotkin. Their contributions to geography in the form of new theories about human ecology, decentralization, and experiential education were clearly aimed at halting the use of geographic research for imperialistic ends and toward the discovery of models of better balanced and more humane social relationships and relations between people and their environments. Their notoriety stemmed from a different

source – a growing commitment to radical social change and their role in the development of a social anarchist philosophy and practice.

Development of a radical theory of social ecology

In a comprehensive analysis of the contributions of Reclus to social geography and ecology, John Clark claims that both Reclus and Kropotkin shared a particular optimism based on their broad love and understanding of the natural world and people, but also on their belief in the power of science to provide a better understanding of the determinants of the social world and examples of more balanced human/environment relations. Both geographers believed that this knowledge would provoke critiques of social inequality and the abuse of nature that would result in the creation of people who were more active, responsible agents in their own liberation. Reclus devotes considerable attention in his six volume work, *L'Homme et la Terre* (1905–08), to analyses of the effects of the human exploitation of nature and examples of how resources can be used to promote social well-being. Establishing the basis of a contemporary radical theory of social ecology, both geographers believed that imbalances in nature reflected imbalances in human relationships and suggested that people base their use of the natural world on a respect for, and understanding of, its key properties. Kropotkin and Reclus assumed that sustainable human/environment relations could only be initiated through social transformation and fundamental changes in human values that would promote the demise of capitalism, racism, the modern State, gender inequities, and other forms of social hierarchy. They perceived that these changes would then be supported by a progressive sense of place, greater human interaction, and the centrality of love. While Kropotkin tried to develop a basis for higher moral standards from the natural world, Reclus assumed that moral development would come from the growing scope of our knowledge and attachment to key life systems.

As students of the natural world, Reclus and Kropotkin found unity and progress in diversity. They believed that people would derive their understanding of both progressive and flawed social relationships from the active and deliberate exploration of their communities at the ground level. Some of their initial ideas about the power of particular kinds of egalitarian social and human/environment relationships were based on their observations of life among the Swiss Jura watchmakers in the late nineteenth century who overcame many social and environmental obstacles to progress through complex cooperative social and spatial networks. Kropotkin also developed his concept of 'mutual aid', in part, as a reaction against the rise of Social Darwinism in the 1890s, which argued for the importance of competition over cooperation in human relations. Using counter-examples drawn from the natural and social world to establish the basis for a moral standard, he hoped to support cooperative impulses and encourage people to replace freedom-blocking institutions with those that support collaborative work. Much of this basis for a theory of social ecology and municipal democracy was taken up in the late twentieth century and developed further by anarcho-feminist ecologists and social anarchist Murray Bookchin.

Decentralism: The sociology and geography of anarchism

Kropotkin also believed that certain kinds of human–environment relations and social and spatial modes of interaction were more conducive to development of the human potential. Decentralism is the revolutionary social anarchist philosophy and socio-spatial form of organization that he believed would comprise the foundation of a new cooperative anarchist mode of living. These ideas are developed in several pieces of writing, much of which is considered prophetic in its anticipation of contemporary problems of food security and critiques of large-scale enterprise, the dehumanization of work, and the lack of imagination in learning. Kropotkin's version of 'decentralism' envisions a multitude of associations federated for the purposes of trade and production, intellectual, and artistic exchange, as well as communal villages and urban neighborhoods federated across geographic and thematic boundaries for the purposes of distribution, consumption, and innovation.

Both Reclus and Kropotkin anchored their ideas for communal decentralism not in fanciful utopias but in direct human observation, scientific analysis, and experimentation with new social and spatial forms of living. They also encouraged people to engage in active, participatory experiential learning from a young age, believing that this approach to education would capitalize on the natural imagination and curiosity of young people and encourage a critical examination and analysis of both the past and the present. These ideas were best articulated in a moving plea for social relevance in education entitled 'What geography ought to be', written by Kropotkin in 1885. Here, he describes the importance of building on the passions and natural curiosities of children to want to know about different people and places. He also suggests a potential role for geography as a discipline to redirect its prior support for imperialist ventures toward helping to dissipate national rivalries, racial prejudice, and class interests.

Anarchist Decentralism in Spain, 1936–39

Nowhere did the ideas generated by Kropotkin and Reclus about a communal space economy have more extensive application than in Spain in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when anarchism emerged

as a strong revolutionary movement. When Franco and his fascist generals attacked the newly elected Republic in July 1936, thousands of industrial workers and peasants responded with militias and also with a massive collectivization of land, factories, transportation systems, and public services. Collectivization encompassed more than one-half of the total land area of Republican Spain, affecting the lives of nearly eight million people. Large cities like Barcelona were transformed into federations of neighborhoods, while in many parts of the Republican held countryside, new irrigation systems and well-organized federations of communes allowed peasants to bring new land under cultivation, expanding and diversifying production. Social landscapes accommodated new educational, cultural, and health facilities. Massive regional exchange networks formed by federations of collectives starting at the local level and working their way up to districts and provinces, linked cities with the countryside for the purposes of distribution and consumption, extending transportation and health services into areas that had never been serviced before. A revolution, which began by creating more communal and egalitarian relationships among people, resulted in the creation of highly efficient and environmentally sensitive new spatial formations.

None of these developments would have taken place without decades of preparation for self-management and the elaborate organizing strategies used by anarcho-syndicalist trade unions that acknowledged the importance to workers and peasants of an affiliation based on both trade and locale (pueblo). These tactics encouraged people operating under extremely oppressive conditions, to become critical observers and analysts of the economic system under which they labored and the political structures that secured inequality and unequal divisions of power. Strikes and pueblo seizures, however temporary, also provided the space and opportunity for Spanish workers to experiment with many alternative communal forms of workplace and community management. It is possible to trace many efforts to decentralize economic and social space, and create whole new communal systems of regional communication and exchange, directly to the writings of Kropotkin and the ideas spread by the travel of Elisée Reclus and his brother Elie in Spain prior to the start of the Spanish Civil War and social revolution in 1936. Decentralist practices similar to these have emerged more recently in Argentina, in the struggles of the Zapatistas in Mexico, and in contemporary anti-globalization struggles.

The Early Influence of Social Anarchism on Land-Use Planners

Anarchist theories of social ecology and decentralism developed by geographers Kropotkin and Reclus have also influenced many practitioners and theorists in the spatial disciplines who sought solutions to a variety of social problems partly through environmental planning. For example, it is claimed that his close reading of Kropotkin, heavily influenced the more communal residential forms and innovative ideas for linking agriculture and industry, found in Ebenezer Howard's early and more radical formulation of the Garden City alternative.

Paul Goodman and his architect brother, Percival, also drew heavily on Kropotkin's decentralist concepts and examined their implications for planning in their groundbreaking book, *Communitas: Means of Livelihood and Ways of Life* (1947). Here, they decried the dehumanizing effects of bureaucracy and social engineering while demonstrating through hypothetical community planning scenarios, how built environments could display and reinforce differing social priorities from efficiency to communality. Encouraging people to reject externally imposed designs for living, the Goodmans echoed Kropotkin's call for people to transform themselves into active change agents and to decentralize decision making in planning wherever and whenever possible.

Patrick Geddes, a prominent Scottish biologist and town planner, also drew heavily upon social anarchist philosophy and Kropotkin's concept of decentralism in the promotion of participatory, experiential education, and urban regional development. To encourage responsible citizenship, Geddes devised and built the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh to promote active environmental exploration of the social networks and the physical environment of the city by ordinary citizens. Drawing on the ideas of Kropotkin and Reclus, he sought to awaken students' imaginations by moving them beyond book study into the field as the site for active inquiry-based learning. The Outlook Tower became the hub of these activities and the repository of visual findings. With a *camera obscura* on the roof, the building was open to all, and encouraged shared insights and accumulated knowledge.

In the 1970s, British architect and anarchist, Colin Ward, founder of Freedom Press and former Director of Education for the Town and Country Planning Association, reinvented this concept of a place to train young explorers in participatory design and planning in the many Urban Studies Centres he inspired throughout the UK. He also wrote several books on how to encourage young people and adults to become actively involved in their cities and towns. Ward reissued an edited and updated version of Kropotkin's *Fields, Factories and Workshops* in the 1970s and wrote extensively on dweller control of housing, squatting, and numerous efforts to reclaim space in the city and countryside for the purposes of survival and free public use. In the years since, he has continued to advocate for open-minded, flexible planning and extensive resident involvement in housing.

In addition to those traditions that emphasize social planning, it is important to recognize other aspects of anarchist philosophy promoted in the 1950s and the 1960s by groups such as the avant garde Situationist Internationale, whose philosophies influenced the worker and student riots in France in May 1968. The Situationists, and particularly the writings of Guy Debord, demonstrate how the urban environment and everyday sensory experience are conditioned by the 'society of the spectacle', driven by the ethos of commodified capitalism and the need to sell both products and lifestyles. Part of their revolutionary response was to utilize the techniques of psychogeography such as the 'dérive' (unplanned drifting through the city to awaken real desire) and 'détournement' (an artistic technique to subversively reappropriate space through the transformation of messages found on such artifacts as billboards). These tactics were meant to contest the passivity of the spectacle, break the hold of commodities, and create terrains of resistance. Hakim Bey's promotion of temporary autonomous zones (TAZs) as sites of free expression and the encouragement of imaginative and experimental short-term uses of space is a more recent manifestation of this approach.

Anarchist Geographies: The Spatial Foundation of Anarchist Theory and Practice

Space is important to the social anarchist revolutionary project in several key respects. Social injustice, oppression, inequality, and the sources of power that underlie these relationships are often reflected in, or reveal themselves through, the structuring and appearance of the landscape and built environment. Anarchists also recognize the importance of creating social and physical spaces in which to develop strategies of resistance to the exercise of political and economic power, and for experimentation with alternative social formulations. Finally, the transformation of space plays a key role in anarchist conceptions of a new society built upon a foundation of cooperation and exchange rather than hierarchy.

Inciting Protest, Building Desire: Spatial Reflections of Domination and Inequality

Under capitalism, the study of the underlying forces behind the structuring and appearance of space reveal how many social needs are ignored, and ecological balances disturbed, by land-use patterns that promote the rights of property over need or the public good. Anarchists believe that 'reading' a landscape in such a fashion enables conceptual connections to be drawn between social inequities, the exercise of power through public policy, and space. It is thought that the stark visibility of injustice inscribed in the environment can motivate a desire for greater knowledge of the underlying causes, as well as spark protest and direct action.

In pre-Civil War Spain, inequities and manifestations of the centralized power of the state and church were clearly reflected in the landscape. Peasants with few means of survival were crowded into small villages while large landowners left most of the countryside uncultivated. In other regions, a limited capitalist agrarian and industrial economy produced massive unemployment, housing crises, and the need for the presence of the Guardia Civile in every neighborhood of most large cities. A more contemporary example of how space can be used in organizing to draw attention to conditions of domination and inequality involves the use of public art and memory in anti-gentrification struggles. In present-day Liberty City, Miami, images of once viable working-class neighborhoods and the names of the residents displaced by urban renewal strategies were recently displayed in the spaces undergoing change. Housing activists and residents believed that the placement of such disruptive elements in a gentrifying landscape that itself depended so heavily on projecting an image of upscale transformation could subvert the redevelopment process by revealing and tainting hidden agendas and stirring public protest.

Strategies of Resistance and Transformation: Insurgent Place Making

Efforts to create alternative, place-based development scenarios follow closely from the kinds of tactics of resistance described above. Social anarchists do not draw precise blueprints for a new society or the built environment that supports it, believing that alternative social and spatial formations must emerge from precise historical circumstances as well as local preferences, needs, and assets. The broad objectives of a decentralist vision are nevertheless clear to: underscore the importance of personal freedom within the context of social responsibility; allow the free development of self while supporting the freedom of others; and enable continuous growth and change in environments that have the ecological and social capacity to sustain present and future generations.

To move closer to this ideal, anarchists encourage the creation of insurgent citizens and organized grassroot mobilizations that are designed to subvert the agendas of the state or private developers by claiming rights to such necessities as affordable housing, quality education, healthcare, and other social provisions. Anarchists also seek to identify positive tendencies and assets that already exist in a society (or place), and to enlarge the space for these tendencies to grow and percolate even

while situated within an otherwise oppressive set of social constraints. In social anarchist theory, it is believed that the contradictions unleashed by creating 'free' spaces that nurture resistance, hope, and experimentation with alternative ways of living and working, will contribute to productive dissidence and the spatial imaginary. It is then hoped that the contradictions between 'what is' and 'what could be', as well as the visibility of well-functioning collective social institutions and noncapitalist work settings, will move people beyond their more limited experience, and support their belief in the possibility for change. The alteration of space is, in this way, meant to become a key part of a process of bringing new visions of the future into the present and motivating action.

Spatial Alternatives to Hierarchy: From Small Scale to the Mobile and Networked

Bringing imagined spaces of active participation, freedom, and cooperative production into being within the hierarchical strictures of present-day society necessarily places emphasis on the local and small scale. The idea is that by reducing the scale of institutions and enabling people to establish collective control over them, more intimate and egalitarian social relationships, and caring approaches to the environment, will result. Less understood but equally important to the theory and practice of anarchist decentralism is the utilization of the geographic constructs of mobility and networking in the formation of more efficient and sophisticated alternatives to hierarchical structures for organizing business and the social and economic base of community life. Social anarchism challenges many notions of economic efficiency by demonstrating how various forms of technology, divisions of labor, and workplace organization are not based on scientific principle, but rather on property interests and modes of production that allow enormous discrepancies in wealth and power to exist. Smallness of scale, self-management, networks, and federations are posed as alternative ways to both structure the economic landscape on a more egalitarian basis and produce alternative avenues to efficiency in systems of production, distribution, and consumption.

As applied in Spain during the anarchist social revolution of the 1930s, villages and neighborhoods were not expected to become self-sufficient entities. Rather, they were made part of elaborate space economies that promoted interregional exchange and cooperation. While greater regional self-sufficiency was sought to reduce dependency and facilitate more equal relationships among people, limited specialization became part of the active interchange of information, products, knowledge, and even labor as facilitated by multiple federative structures. To avoid cultural isolation and enhance the environment for innovation, many extra-territorial linkages of people were also established to enable the collaborative exchange of ideas and cultural endeavors. In a contemporary vein, while the potential of transnational networks of resistance and collective enterprise may not be fully realized, anti-globalization efforts have recognized and begun to utilize new communication technologies to forge ever more effective extra-local connections among relatively autonomous groups in their organizing strategies.

Anarchist Epistemologies of Freedom: Challenging and Reconstructing Geographic Knowledge and Planning Practice

Neither Kropotkin nor Reclus abandoned their geography to become political and social anarchists. Instead, they set out to extend the idea of revolution and social critique from the realm of politics alone into the realm of geographic inquiry. Many contemporary geographers and planners have since taken on this project and applied anarchist social and spatial principles to both a critique of spatial planning and the acquisition of geographic knowledge and teaching.

Questioning Knowledge Hierarchies

Fundamental to the anarchist vision of social change is the importance of consistency between means and ends. Social anarchists do not believe that authoritarian-driven struggles can produce anti-authoritarian ends. Much attention is therefore devoted to the importance of decentering knowledge and promoting education for self-management. Transgressing knowledge boundaries often produces anxiety in academic circles and yet anarchist geographers and planners argue forcefully for democratizing education and promoting the free flow of ideas and 'chance encounters'. They call for a more liberating, critical, and reflexive form of learning to be taught in the schools and in venues outside the classroom. Besides challenging conventional ways of knowing and transgressing the boundaries set by individual disciplines and professions, they advocate for transgressive relational thinking and practice as well as the examination of community life from its margins.

This process is intimately connected to the formation of liberatory pedagogies that question all hierarchies of knowledge and support forms of mutual learning that facilitate choice rather than impose ideas or mold character. The implications for epistemologies and pedagogies of higher education are profound. Kropotkin and Reclus were among the first to call for geography as a discipline to be taught both inside and outside the classroom by teachers who would be drawn from all walks of life. Today, community-based learning and

engaged scholarship are sanctioned by even the most traditional colleges and universities who see the value of extending learning venues outside the academy and into the 'real' world, enabling students to augment and apply what they are learning to pressing social issues. While anarchists would applaud such approaches, they would caution students and faculty to take their direction in such settings from the grassroot organizations they are working with. They would suggest the need to build relationships upon a foundation of reciprocity, accountability, reflection, and sustainability (i.e., extending projects beyond academic semesters and over time through long-term partnerships).

Promoting Participatory Design and Insurgent Planning Practices

In anarchist geography, the emphasis on decentering knowledge has also been applied to a critique of the professional realm of spatial planning. In this light, anarchists devote considerable thought and experimentation to uncovering the methods by which people can transform themselves into the kinds of individuals who become active agents of change in their own lives and who function without submitting to authority. In the spatial disciplines, this has taken the form of calls for a return to the active exploration of local environments by residents, and more participatory planning and design. In the US, demands for greater citizen involvement in planning followed urban riots in many cities in the late 1960s, and tumultuous protests of the disastrous impacts to low-income and working-class residents displaced by urban renewal policies of the mid-twentieth century. As in the pedagogical debates alluded to above, epistemological questions were raised about professional versus indigenous knowledge and about monopolies on expertise, including who has the right to apply their knowledge to address social problems.

Since the 1960s, various forms of critical and participative practice have been incorporated into local planning, including efforts to actively involve recent immigrants, and children and youth in the planning process. These approaches involve the application of a range of methods designed to uncover local assets and facilitate the study and representation of problems that have social and environmental consequences. Environmental exploration, storytelling, and community-based and asset mapping are key approaches used by anarchist geographers and radical planners to create more engaged citizens and generate new models of communication to better negotiate people's hopes and desires. The impacts of these practices have infiltrated the academy and the spatial disciplines in the form of new discourses and in the invention of new approaches to research. Most notable is participatory action research, a methodology that seeks to directly involve community residents in the framing of problems and research questions, the choice of study methods, data collection, the interpretation of results, and the design of actions in response. Anarchist geographers are actively involved in promoting participative approaches to research that have political implications and shift power downward in a genuine way. However, they caution practitioners to be aware of the challenges presented by people's complicated attachments to place and by a nonlinear process that requires a great time commitment and can produce unexpected results. Anarchists also argue that the encouragement of greater participation in planning be seen as one of several ways to create room for negotiating needs and transforming spaces that allow residents to imprint their surroundings and better articulate and meet their needs.

Dismantling the 'Ordered' Landscape

One significant roadblock that anarchist geographers see to greater citizen participation in innovative planning and urban design are regulations and laws pertaining to the use of space. They argue that these are often unrelated to people's needs and are solely there to support particular power relationships and uneven development. Anarchist geography thus challenges overt efforts to manipulate behavior or deny free access to space through design, while also disputing the practice of 'master planning' and all efforts to divide space into neat categories or impose overly determined restrictions on use. Many geographers have pointed to the basis in fear of spatial policies designed to contain perceived disorder (e.g., the Haussmanization of Paris that replaced thousands of working-class neighborhoods with wide boulevards or the spatial fortressing policies that restrict the mobility of the homeless today). Anarchist geographers move beyond this critique to argue forcibly against all forms of planning that utilize spatial codes for the purposes of social control or the containment of diverse life styles.

David Sibley's studies of the urban gypsies in Hull, England provide one example of how planned spaces can contain embedded and false assumptions about people and social structures, thus inhibiting free association. He describes how planners have attempted to use restrictive classifications of space to control and alter the activities of nonconforming groups. Sibley believes that such efforts to homogenize and 'purify' space through the precise assignment of its use violates the rights of people to survive through the integration of activities in space (e.g., living and working). Rather than support culturally diverse dwellers in their efforts to enhance autonomy and self-sufficiency, he argues that planners tend to define these groups as 'deviant'. Sibley also suggests that much of the mathematical spatial modeling that went on in geography in the mid-twentieth century – Central Place

theory and the geometry of Walter Christaller, for example – was an effort to bring order to a disorderly physical world while building the power and prestige of its practitioners. Critics of earlier Garden City or New Town movements as well as more recent critics of the New Urbanism draw heavily upon this opposition to order for order's sake and the stifling of creative expression through over regulation of the uses and appearances of public and private space.

The Inevitability of Uncertainty: Planning Flexible Spaces to Accommodate Ambiguity, Diversity, and Change

Accompanying the call for a more-informed and involved citizenry, and a belief in the social intentionality behind spatial design, is the insistence by anarchists that planning processes and regulations be less restrictive in order to meet changing needs and diverse constituencies. Anarchists eschew artificial and prescribed utopias, and do not believe that modifications to the built environment can substitute for radical change in the fabric of social life. They do nevertheless believe that design can help to create spaces in which positive social tendencies and the fulfillment of human needs can incubate. In opposition to the modernist project of state-centered planning with no acknowledgment of contradiction and conflict, anarchists argue for the return of a visionary reality, activism, and the social imagination to planning and design. This would take the form of new models of regionalism and the design of more flexible spaces to accommodate integrated and multiple uses of space that are open to the possibility of alteration. Anarchist planning would also promote the practice of using existing structures differently over time and of recycling spaces as needs change.

In an era of globalization, where cities have come to house many transnational communities, and neighborhoods are often characterized by the constancy of change, anarchist geographers would argue as well for greater acceptance of heterogeneous cultural geographies. They would suggest that spaces remain fluid to accommodate the conflict and ambiguity of actual social life. This includes attention to the profound adjustments necessitated by the movement of people across borders and to the changing meanings and attachments to place that result. While not antiplanning, anarchists oppose state-centered planning and emphasize the need to decentralize formal decision making to the most local level possible given historically and situation-specific circumstances. They also encourage the creation of many informal social centers that bring disparate groups together to secure everyday spaces for experimentation and the development of cooperative work-related, residential, and cultural settings. They believe that occupations of unoccupied buildings and the creation of informal sites, such as a growing number of Occupied Social Centres in Italy and the rest of Europe, can support survival and promote practical alliances among residents in their struggles with local authorities around a range of issues that affect the quality of daily life. Openness to changing plans and access to spaces that bring different people together are considered crucial if social diversity is to become a basis for a new collective politics, and if resistance to the continued erosion of social welfare wrought by neoliberal political agendas is to be mounted on a local level.

Charting a Course: The Potential Bricolage of Anarchism and Geography

The revolution in geography that Kropotkin and Reclus initiated well over a century ago remains tied to an as yet unfulfilled social revolution based upon anarchist principles and practices. Their prescient insights have nevertheless altered the practices of contemporary geographers and planning professionals in profound ways, and their ideas continue to present a challenge to all of the spatial disciplines and their practitioners. In one sense, the challenge is the same as that posed by Kropotkin a century ago: the need for geography to reinvigorate active exploration of local environments as a means of fostering more critical social analysis, developing more effective networks of resistance, and spurring the creative incubation of alternative social and work environments to meet real needs and unmet desires. Questions that remain concern how best to accomplish this mission. How, for example, can geography better employ social anarchist principles to catalyze the active involvement of people at the local level in the creative processes of environmental study? What methods might enable the study of space and its transformation to support struggles for social justice and ecological responsibility while extending free and creative expression? How do we deploy geographic knowledge to invite rather than stifle dialog among people with differing perspectives and experientially derived expertise? How can the powerful spatial tools of federations and networks be better used to link social movements across space? These are questions that would have interested Kropotkin and Reclus greatly.

See also: Darwinism (and Social Darwinism); Ecology; Marxism/Marxist Geography I; Marxism/Marxist Geography II; Radical Environmentalism; Radical Geography.

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